



State Representative Marlene Anielski
Ohio House District 6

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 776, also known as the "Allison Rose Suhy Act." The idea behind House Bill 776 began with a constituent in my district having an anaphylactic reaction she had experienced due to her allergy to peanuts. Allison Rose Suhy was an 18-year-old college freshman when she died after eating a donut.

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, the prevalence of food allergies among children increased 18% during 1997 – 2007, and allergic reactions to foods have become the most common cause of anaphylactic reactions in community health settings. Children with food allergies are two to four times more likely to have asthma or other allergic conditions than those without food allergies. Food allergies affect an estimated 4%-6% of all children in the United States, and there is currently no known cure. Strict avoidance of the food allergen is the only way to prevent a reaction, but early and quick recognition and treatment can prevent serious health problems or death.

House Bill 776 seeks to address the growing concern of food allergies, by implementing in-service training for staff members employed at state institutions of higher education, as well as staff members employed at public grade schools about how to recognize and respond to a person experiencing an allergic reaction. House bill 776 would add food allergy awareness training to the listing of optional trainings, and these staff members would earn Continuing Education Units for the Training. It is important to note that there would be no increase in the number of hours required.

Each state institution of higher education would provide all incoming students and staff with information about food allergies including available campus resources. Such information would also be posted on the website of each state institution of higher education. Additionally, House Bill 776 would include age-appropriate instruction for students from kindergarten to 12th grade on food allergies and ways to assist an individual experiencing an allergic reaction.

Once again, Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

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